



*First Presbyterian Church
418 West Coolidge
Borger, Tx 79007
December 2008~*



**The Silent Night
A Christmas Story**

Each year, on December 24, a special passenger train pulled by a bright red electric locomotive heads out of the train station in Salzburg for a half hour trip to the village of Oberndorf, Austria. A multitude of languages can be heard as passengers from all over the globe become Christmas pilgrims, heading for the birthplace of the world's best loved Christmas carol "Silent Night." At the same time, the Oberndorf streets are crowded with cars bearing license plates from neighboring European Churches can be seen across the nations and filled with people who have raced along the autobahns to arrive in time for the special Christmas Eve "Silent Night" twilight service.

Throughout the world, "Silent Night" which has been translated into more than 200 languages, is an anchor for Christmas celebrations. Its lullaby-like melody and simple message of heavenly peace can be heard from small town street corners in mid-America to magnificent cathedrals in Europe and from outdoor candlelight concerts in Australia to palm thatched huts in northern Peru. The original church of St. Nicholas where "Silent Night" was first heard in 1818 was torn down in the early part of this century after sustaining damage from the flooding of the nearby Salzach River. The Silent Night Chapel was erected on the spot in front of the main altar where Gruber and Mohr stood with the choir to sing the six-stanza carol. In a higher section of town, another church was built and the original pulpit and altars from the old church were moved there. At Christmas Midnight Mass, singers stand in front of the same altars and recreate the moment when the song heard 'round the world was first performed.

FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE
First Presbyterian Church Newsletter

December

Borger, Texas

2008

Pastor's Pen
December 2008

Dear Friends:

It is that time of the year when we begin to think about Christmas and this year is no different. The sanctuary is decorated, homes around town are lit, and we sing the appropriate songs and carols of Advent and Christmastide.

But this is a year, a season, a time when our country and the world are unsettled. Our world financial condition is frightening and violence and war rage around us. We see it daily from the Middle East and from the very land where the Prince of Peace was born and carried out His ministry. When Jesus was an infant, fear, hatred and unspeakable violence swirled around Him; the times were much like our own. Where is the Peace of Christ(mas)?

Longfellow writes:

*I heard the bells on Christmas Day,
Their old familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet, the words repeat
Of peace on earth, good will to men.
And in despair I bowed my head:
"There is no peace on earth," I said.
"For hate is strong, and mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good will to men."*

So what is "Christmas Peace"? It has to do with the candles of Advent, the quietness of Christmas Eve, a silent night, a lovely sanctuary. It's a lovely experience, and unfortunately it won't last long.

So what is the "Peace of Jesus Christ?" The "Peace of Christ" has to do with those people in whom the Prince of Peace lives. When the Prince of Peace lives within the manger of our heart, we become people who work for justice and rightness. Peace ... follows along behind.

Longfellow does not leave us in despair. He continues:

*Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
"God is not dead, nor doth He sleep;
"The wrong shall fail, the right prevail,
With peace on earth, good will to men"*

My Christmas prayer for all of us this year is one of peace. I pray that God will bless us as a people, a nation and a world, that we will truly know and reflect the Peace of Christ.

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Georgia

Stated Session Meeting November 23, 2008

The Stated Session meeting was held in the church Conference Room, beginning at 11:40 am with prayer. The following were present and constituted a quorum: the Rev. Georgia King and elders Phyllis Harmony, Harold Hebermehl, Hazel Howard, Julia Kasch, Pat Petty, and Jerry Pool. No Elders was absent. Treasurer Pam Nicholas was also present.

Minutes of the previous meeting were approved. Letters and communications were noted. The whereabouts of the Education Building key used by HCCC was questioned now that they are no longer using our facility.

The monthly financial reports were approved. The salary rate for Mrs. Garlington for December was discussed. A flat rate of \$120 per week was approved. Three pledge cards have been received. The clerk will write a Stewardship article for the December newsletter. The Manse CD will expire in December, and the Clerk will prepare an approval letter so that Rev. King and Elder Pool can remove \$6,000 and accumulated interest from the total and renew the remainder.

Rev. King reminded Elders about the Advent readings sign up sheet. Rev. King will not be here January 25, 2009 and possibly the Sunday after Christmas (December 28).

No notable problems to be reported on property. Elder Pool said that Barbara did some cleanup work in the Education Building and painting before her departure.

We will not have Wednesday night suppers during December. It was noted that turnout is better when meals are held during daylight hours. The idea of a brunch before church during January or possibly Valentines Day (prepared by the men) was considered.

The Adult class is reading and discussing the book, "The Shack."

The status of our hiring process for a new secretary was outlined. We have ten applications on hand for review by the Session members.

There was no old business to be discussed.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

The Treasurer reported the following figures for October:

Total Income	\$ 6,092.93
Total Expenses	\$ <u>6,462.66</u>
Total	\$ (369.73)



	Year to Date
Total Income	\$ 72,427.15
Total Expenses	\$ <u>70,854.98</u>
Total	\$ 1,572.17

Care of Members and Friends

Please keep these members and friends in our prayers...



Scott Glenn
Bobbie & James Farrell
Bob & Aleyene Watkins
Pete Marsh
Leah Buckland & Family



Notes from the Music Department



Well, folks, it is that time of year again! The Christmas season is here whether we are ready or not. But hasn't the weather just be gorgeous. Just a few cold spells. But I am sure that Mother Nature will take care of that for December!! And who knows - we could actually have a white Christmas after all!

Choir practice for December will be on the following nights: December 3 at 6:30 pm and December 10 at 6:30pm. There will be no practice on December 17 (Session), December 24 (Christmas Eve Communion Service at 7:00 pm), or December 31 (New Year's Eve). We may have a short practice on December 17 before Session. I will contact the choir if we do.

Closing Response for the month of December will be divided into two different responses. December 7 & 14 will be the Dresden Amen that is in our hymnal. December 21 & 28 will be "Gloria, Gloria!" that is also in our hymnal. The page number will be listed in the bulletin each Sunday. We will pick up the pace somewhat in January with a festive closing response. I will surprise you with it in next month's Newsletter!!

Anthems for December will be some old and some new music. December 7 will be one that everyone seemed to enjoy last year and we are going to repeat it again this year. So make sure you are in church on Sunday, December 7! And while you're at it, just make sure you are in church every Sunday for December. We just might surprise you with something!!!

As always, we hold Bob & Aleyene Watkins, Mary Botkin, Scott Glenn, and Bobbie & Jim Farrell in our prayers and in our hearts. We also hold all past and present choir members in our hearts. We miss you all.

May the Good Lord watch between you and me while we are absent one from the other!

Pat Petty and Choir

Stewardship Commitment Sunday

While looking over some personal church records, I came upon a list of "Provocations" (author unknown) which included this one:

"There are two Great Commandments—love the Lord your God...and love your neighbor as yourself. There are also only two fundamental reasons to give money to the church—and they are very much like those two commandments. First, God is generous and we are grateful. Second, we want to support faithful ministries. Everything else is either commentary or barnacles."

Also, there was a budget review I wrote for the 1993 Annual Report, which began with this commentary (barnacle?):

"The operating budget is a concrete statement of our commitment to our local ministries and to the denomination's ministries. The level at which we collectively support financially our church, and the manner in which the Session allocates those monies is a demonstration of our values. Having said that, it must be recognized that, as a smaller congregation, our emphasis must be slanted more to local activities rather than to outreach."

Yes, we are smaller now than fifteen years ago but just as generous and grateful. We give much of our time and talents as well as monies to support our congregation and the larger church. And at a level greater than larger congregations. We expect our financial needs for 2009 to be about the same as this year, in the \$85,000-\$86,000 range.

Stewardship Commitment Sunday is December 14. If you cannot be here that day, please mail your pledge card to the church.

Hal Hebermehl

